

Background Information: Some historians have claimed that the Second Moroccan Crisis of 1911 nearly caused war. The German action of sending the gunboat Panther to Agadir in July 1911 caused tensions with both Britain and France, especially because German intentions were not clear. Tensions were increased later in the month when Lloyd George, a senior member of the British government, made a speech warning Germany that Britain would defend its interests. The crisis was ended by negotiations between France and Germany in November 1911. These led to a secret agreement in which Germany accepted France's position in Morocco in return for some territory in Africa. When news of the agreement leaked out, it was heavily criticised in Germany. Did the crisis nearly cause war?

SOURCE A: The Second Moroccan Crisis began when France sent troops to the city of Fez to prevent rebellions by some tribes. The Sultan of Morocco had been forced to get help from France. On 1 July 1911, a gunboat was sent by Germany to the port of Agadir in Morocco. The gunboat, called the Panther, was meant to scare the French. Germany wanted to separate France and Britain and to maintain Germany as a strong European power. The Panther caused tensions between Britain and Germany because of the competition between their navies. Britain saw the gunboat's arrival as part of Germany's plan to create a naval base on Morocco's Atlantic coast and to interfere with its naval domination of the Atlantic Ocean. Germany's actions did not come close to causing a war. Germany was still unable to break apart the alliance between France and Britain, and France and Germany made an agreement. France would be allowed to continue its activity in Morocco without Germany intervening if it gave something back to Germany. As a result, Germany got parts of the French Congo in Africa. Germany got the bad end of the deal. It was given land that nobody wanted. Moreover, France now had full permission to make Morocco into a protectorate.

SOURCE D: The Germans might attempt a surprise attack against our navy. The German High Seas Fleet has put to sea and vanished. Let's suppose, instead of going to Norway as announced, it has gone straight for Portland, preceded by a division of destroyers which could launch a surprise night torpedo attack. This could bring the main German fleet into action at dawn against our ships which would be without steam, without coal, without crews. From a British newspaper, 21 July 1911. The British and German navies had arranged joint naval exercises in Norwegian waters. Portland was a major British naval base where some Dreadnoughts were based.

SOURCE E: We are in a satisfactory position of having twice as many Dreadnoughts as Germany AND A NUMBER GREATER BY ONE THAN THE WHOLE OF THE REST OF THE WORLD PUT TOGETHER! I don't think there is the very faintest fear of war! How lucky we are! Just when there is a tendency to ease down our naval activities comes AGADIR! Admiral Fisher, head of the British navy, to a member of the British government, 1 August 1911

SOURCE F: Now we know where Britain stands. Like a flash of lightning in the night, these events have shown the German people where the enemy is. We know now, when we wish to expand in the world, when we wish to have our place in the sun, who it is that lays claim to world-wide domination. Gentleman, we Germans are not in the habit of permitting this sort of thing and the German people will know how to reply. We shall secure peace, not by concessions, but with the German sword. From a speech in the

Reichstag by Ernst von Heydebrand, leader of the German Conservative Party, November 1911. He was responding to the Franco-German agreement over Morocco and was greeted with thunderous applause.

SOURCE G: The only real crisis in Anglo-German relations between 1904 and 1914 was in the summer of 1911 over the Morocco dispute with France. Senior members of the German government lacked any talent for dealing with Britain and did damage by their sloppy handling of the affair. They sent the gunboat Panther to Morocco on 1 July 1911. Though the British government demanded an explanation, our government left them in the dark about our intentions for several weeks. The result was Lloyd George's speech warning that Britain would side with France if it was challenged. I was off duty and about to leave on my summer holiday when I learned about the sending of the Panther. I believed this show of power was a mistake. We did not want to go to war and the German government made a blunder when it did not reveal its intentions. We gave later assurances that we never considered demanding Moroccan territory and it looked as if we were backing away from Britain's raised sword. From the memoirs of Grand Admiral Tirpitz, published in 1919. Tirpitz was in charge of the German navy, but was forced to resign in 1916.